

EXCERPT from THE COMING OF THE WHITE WOMEN, 1836

from Narcissa Whitman's Journal, Aug. 28 to 30, 1836

"28th This morn lingered with Husband on the top of the hill that overlooks Grand Round, for berries, untill we were some distance behind camp. Have no distressing apprehensions now the moment we are out of sight of camp for we have entirely passed the dangerous country. Always enjoy riding alone with him, especially when we talk about home friends. It is then the tedious hours are sweetly decoyed away. We descend a very steep hill in coming into Grand Round at the foot of which is a beautiful cluster of pine trees, pitch & spruce, but no white pine like what I have been accustomed to see at home. Grand Round is indeed a beautiful place. It is a circular plain, surrounded with lofty mountains & has a beautiful stream coursing through it in some places is delightful, & the soil rich, in other places we find the white sand & sage as usual so peculiar to this country. We neoned upon Grand Round River. The Cammas grows here in abundance & it is the principal resort of the Cayouses & many other tribes, to obtain it of which they are very fond. It resembles an onion in shape and colour, when cooked is very sweet, tastes like a fig. Their manner of baking them is very curious. They dig a hole in the ground, throw in a heap of stones, heat them to a red heat cover them with green grass, upon which they put the Cammas & cover the whole with earth, when taken out it is black. This is the chief food of many tribes during winter. After dinner we left the plains & ascended the Blue Mountains. There a new & pleasing scen presented itself, mountains covered with timber through which we rode all the afternoon, a very agreeable change. The scenery reminded me of the hills in my native county Steuben.

29th "Had a continuation of the same scenery as yesterday afternoon. Rode over many logs an obstruction that we had not found in our way since we left the states. Here I frequently met old acquaintances, in the trees & flowers & was not a little delighted. Indeed I do not know as I was ever so much affected with any scenery in my life. The singing of birds the echo of the voices of my fellow travelers, as they were scattered through the woods, all had a strong resemblance to bygone days. But this scene was of short duration. Only one day. Before noon we began to descend one of the most terrible mountains for steepness & length I have yet seen. I(t) was like winding stairs in its descent & in some places almost perpendicular. We were a long time descending it. The horses appeared to dread the hill as much as we did. They would turn & wind in a zigzag manner all the way down. The men usually walked but I could not get permission to, neither did I desire it much. We had no sooner gained the foot of the mountain when another more steep & dreadful was before us. We did not mount this untill we had taken some refreshment and rest. Our ride this afternoon exceeded everythin we have had yet & what rendered it the more aggravating the path all the way was very stony resembling a newly McAdamized road. Our horses feet were very tender, all unshod, so that we could not make that progress we wished. The mountains in many places was covered with this black broken basals. We were late in making camp tonight. After ascending the mountain immediatel after dinner, we kept upon the main divide untill sunset, looking in vain for water and a camping place. While upon this elevation, we had a view of

the western horizon. Beyond the valley we could see two distant Mountains Mount Hood & Mount St. Helens. These lofty peaks were of a conical form & separate from each other by a considerable distance. Behind the former the Sun was hiding part of his rays which gave us a more distinct view of this gigantic cone. The beauty of this extensive valley contrasts well with the rolling mountains behind us & at this hour of twilight was enchanting & quite diverted my mind from the fatigue under which I was labouring. We had yet to descend a hill as long but not as steep or stony as the others. By this our horses were in haste to see camp as well as ourselves & mine made such length strides in descending that it shook my sides surprisingly. It was dark when we got into camp but the tent was ready for me, & tea also, for Mr. McLeod invited us to sup with him. We are now on the west side of the Blue mountains, crossed them in a day & half. Dearest Mother let me tell you how I am sustained of the Lord in all this journey. Yesterday & for two or three days past I have felt weak and restless and scarcely able to sit on my horse yesterday in particular. But see how I have been diverted with the scenery & carried out of myself in conversation about home & friends. Mother will recollect what my feelings were and had been for a year previous to my leaving home. The last revival I enjoyed. My visits to Onondaga & the scenes there. This I call my last impression of home & it is of such a character that when we converse about home these same feelings are revived & I forget that I am weary and want rest. This morning my feelings were a little peculiar. Felt remarkably well and strong, so much so as to mention it. But could not see any reason why I should feel more rested than on the morn previous when I began to see what a days ride was before I understood it. If I had had no better health today than yesterday I should have fainted under it. Then the promise appeared in full view, 'as thy day is, so shall thy strength be', & my soul rejoiced in God, & testifies to the truth of another evidently manifest, "Lo; I am with you alway."

"30th. In consequence of the lengthy camp yesterday & failure of animals two of the company's men left four of theirs behind with packs also. This occasioned some anxiety lest the wolves would destroy their beaver. Today they send back for them & we remain here untill they return or make but a short move to find more grass. In following the course of the stream on which we encamped last night, found cherries in abundance, had time to stop to gather as we wished. Indeed we rambled untill noon, before we went into camp. The cherries are very fine equal to any we find in the states. When we arrived Mr Gray had the dinner ready waiting for us. Our employment this afternoon is various. Some are washing their shirts & some are cutting their hair, others are shaving preparatory to seeing Walla W & some are asleep. For my part I endeavoured to divert myself the best way I could, doing a little mending for Husband, & trying to write while he & Mr. Gray are stretched upon the ground enjoying the refreshment of a sound sleep. The men who went for the animals returned late. We all regretted this hindrance, for Mr. McLeod intended to see Walla W today & return again with a mushmellon for Mrs Whitman (so he said) He will go in tomorrow. It is the custom of the country to send heralds ahead to announce the arrival of a party and prepare for their reception."

cc: Tucker
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Chambers